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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

13 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : David H. Blee
Acting Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: The Preparation and Conduct
of Large-Scale Operational-Tactical Exercises
of the Combined Armed Forces

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on articles from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This article reviews the preparation and conduct of the SHIELD-72 combined operational-tactical exercise held in Czechoslovakia in September 1972 with forces from East Germany, Poland, Hungary and the USSR. The exercise was two-sided, and was conducted in three phases to work out problems such as an assault crossing of the Elbe River, negotiation of obstacles, operations with nuclear weapons, and airborne landings. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article appeared in Issue No. 5, which was published in 1973.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned the [redacted] Codeword [redacted].

David H. Blee

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR/WARSAW PACT

DATE OF
INFO. September 1972

DATE 13 April 1976

SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: The Preparation and Conduct of
Large-Scale Operational-Tactical
Exercises of the Combined Armed
Forces

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article was written by Colonel General K. Rusov. This article reviews the preparation and conduct of the SHIELD-72 combined operational-tactical exercise held in Czechoslovakia in September 1972 with forces from East Germany, Poland, Hungary and the USSR. The author outlines the political and operational-tactical training goals included in the concept of the exercise, and describes a combined conference to lay the preliminary groundwork, as well as the actual planning and preparatory work. The SHIELD-72 exercise was two-sided, and was conducted in three phases. Problems worked out included an assault crossing of the Elbe River, negotiation of obstacles, operations with nuclear weapons, airborne landings, and a variety of other tasks, many accompanied by field firing and bombing. This article appeared in Issue No. 5, which was published in 1973.

End of Summary

Comment:

Lieutenant General Karel Rusov became Chief of the General Staff in April 1968. His two previous assignments were as Inspector General of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces and as Commander of the Fourth Army. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel General in October 1972.

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The Preparation and Conduct of Large-Scale
Operational-Tactical Exercises of the
Combined Armed Forces

by

Colonel General K. Rusov,
Chief of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak People's Army,
First Deputy Minister of Defense of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic

As we know, our military thought is based on the fact that if the imperialists succeed in unleashing a modern war, it will become a class and coalition war from its very inception. Its nature will be determined by the extreme decisiveness of the stated objectives, to achieve which both sides will employ the maximum amount of forces and means in initial operations while simultaneously deploying newly activated units in the theaters of military operations.

The success of operations conducted by coalition troop groupings will depend very much on the abilities of the staffs of front and army formations of the allied armed forces to cooperate effectively among themselves, to incorporate other allied armed forces within their complement, and to organize effective control over their large units and formations. In turn, the latter must be prepared to operate in the territory of allied countries.

To fulfil these requirements, all personnel of the Combined Armed Forces must be at a high morale-political level so that the concept of proletarian internationalism becomes the conviction of every soldier in our armies.

Although the training of allied armies for present-day war is accomplished by the entire troop training process, the importance of conducting combined exercises has been increasing constantly, for it is only under conditions approaching combat to the maximum extent that we are able to check and work out many of the problems of controlling coalition groupings. Moreover, the genuine international combat friendship of the soldiers of the socialist armies will be strengthened in combined military work.

Apart from this, we must consider large-scale combined operational-tactical exercises to be the culmination of much educational work and combat training and also of the training of the generals,

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officers, and staffs of all the fraternal armies participating in the exercises in a given academic year. At the same time, exercises check the knowledge and organizational abilities of those organs (defense ministries and general staffs) which prepare and direct them.

We wish to share some of our experiences in preparing and conducting the SHIELD-72 (SHCHIT-72) combined exercise held in September 1972 in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

* * *

The preparation of a large-scale operational-tactical exercise is, in our opinion, a complex and labor-consuming process. Therefore, at the end of 1971 the General Staff of the Czechoslovak People's Army drew up a special plan for the preparation of the exercise. As a preliminary, we had to study in detail the experience of previously conducted exercises: VLTAVA, ODER-NEISSE, BROTHERHOOD-IN-ARMS (BRATSTVO PO ORUZHIIYU), and others. This gave us the opportunity of assigning the most appropriate tasks to the staffs being trained and troops participating. Overall, the concept of exercise SHIELD-72 had to ensure that:

- it was conducted to a great depth (500 to 700 kilometers);
- the operational and tactical aspects of the exercise were closely interconnected; and
- combat actions were carried out at high rates of speed and with field firings.

It is easy to see that the exercise differed considerably from those conducted previously. From a political point of view and to strengthen the friendship of the Czechoslovak peoples with the soldiers of fraternal armies, it was desirable to hold the exercise in the territory of both republics of Czechoslovakia and to have the troops of the allied armies cooperate most closely.

When developing the concept, great attention also was devoted to determining training goals and tasks for the staffs and troops of the coalition large units being trained on the basis of their national characteristics.

As a result of the preliminary work, we worked out the plan for exercise SHIELD-72 making provisions for the following training goals:

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Political:

- to strengthen fraternal ties and combat friendship among the armies of the member states of the Warsaw Pact as a concrete expression of proletarian internationalism;
- to strengthen socialist international interrelationships among the peoples of the socialist countries, and to strengthen the consciousness of their power and invincibility as a result of the political, economic and military unity of the world socialist system -- the nucleus of all anti-imperialist forces;
- to explain, in accordance with the requirements of the resolution of the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the class essence of the defense of socialism, a task which can be accomplished only by the overall efforts of the peoples of all Warsaw Pact countries;
- to improve, in accordance with the decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the military education of the population of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, particularly the young people; to strengthen the unity of the army and people; and to strengthen the responsibility of all citizens for the defense of their homeland and the entire socialist commonwealth;
- to extend the cooperation of staffs and units of the Czechoslovak People's Army with allied troops; to strengthen a conscientious attitude toward accomplishing combat and political training tasks; to improve control and organizational work; and to strengthen conscious discipline. Based on examples of excellent fulfillment of tasks in exercises, to inculcate in personnel a feeling of pride in belonging to the Czechoslovak People's Army, patriotism and class hatred toward imperialists.

Operational-tactical:

- to improve staff and troop cooperation during combined actions under conditions of a complex ground and air situation; and
- to raise the level of field and air training of the troops and to increase the skills of operational staffs

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in controlling troops.

After working out the concept of the exercise and having it approved by the Minister of National Defense of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, the General Staff, in close cooperation with the Main Political Directorate, Combat Training Directorate, Main Directorate of Rear Services, and other directorates of the Ministry of National Defense and the Czechoslovak People's Army, proceeded to solve organizational problems and formulate the necessary documents.

An important measure was the conduct of combined conferences by representatives of the armies of the Warsaw Pact member states. At the first one of these, the participants familiarized themselves with the concept, settled questions concerning the specific participation of staffs and troops, and received preliminary organizational instructions. At the second conference they settled problems of moving staffs and troops to the departure areas of the exercise, of crossing a national border, and of comprehensive support for the staffs and troops; a reconnaissance of troop operating areas and control post areas was carried out; and the conference participants received all necessary instructions for the conduct of the exercise. As was subsequently borne out, combined conferences such as these are extremely useful.

After carrying out reconnaissance wherein questions were clarified concerning the actual troop actions and the positioning during the entire exercise of the command posts of the participating staffs and directing body, the General Staff worked out a graphic exercise plan. At the same time the Combat Training Directorate formulated a sample plan of troop actions. These documents subsequently became the principal basic materials for both the preparation and the planned conduct of the exercise. They were also tied organically to the plan for the concluding troop ceremony and field parade.

Preparing troops and staffs in advance and thoroughly is one of the primary conditions ensuring a successful exercise (Figures 1 and 2). This preparation was carried out in accordance with plans for the combat, political, and operational training of large units and formations of the allied armies. Here we must emphasize one feature of preparation for an exercise which is applicable to all allied armies, except the Soviet army. We are talking of the need to train formation and large unit staffs to draft combat documents and reports to higher headquarters in the Russian language, as was customary in the SHIELD-72 exercise. Based on this, there

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has arisen the requirement that formation and large unit staff officers and unit commanders of the allied armies participating in exercises know Russian well.

For the actual troop actions, and especially those involving field firing, which were an essential element of the overall operational exercise, it was necessary to prepare beforehand training grounds and firing ranges, routes for the combat equipment, the target layout, and troops representing the enemy; it also was necessary to carry out engineer preparation of the terrain. We contemplated playing out some of the combat actions in densely populated areas; this required the timely gathering of the harvest and the laying out of additional cross-country routes to avoid inflicting physical damage on the national economy.

In the SHIELD-72 exercise formation commanders were charged with directing the equipping of firing ranges and training grounds. Preparation of terrain sectors outside the firing ranges was carried out in close cooperation with party and local government organs.

The ideological training and the organization of party-political work among the troops of the Czechoslovak People's Army and the civilian populace during the exercise were approved by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Main Political Directorate of the Czechoslovak People's Army directed party-political work. To coordinate this work among the troops of the allied armies, an organ made up of representatives of the political organs of the allied armies was established.

The Staff of the Combined Armed Forces gave considerable assistance to the command of the Czechoslovak People's Army in the work associated with the planning and preparation of the exercise.

After officially announcing the beginning of the exercise, all mass information means of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic devoted much attention to propagandizing the political goals of the exercise.

Finally, we must mention the great political significance of the concluding parade of the allied armies in Prague, at which party and government leaders of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the defense ministers of all of the member states of the Warsaw Pact, the Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, and other officials were present. Thousands of citizens from the capital of Czechoslovakia who were present and millions of television viewers had the opportunity of

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convincing themselves with their own eyes of the power and solidarity of the Combined Armed Forces and of their determination to defeat any enemy.

* * *

Directing a large-scale operational-tactical exercise of the Combined Armed Forces is a rather complex problem. To solve it correctly requires above all good organization and, particularly, limiting the number of umpire personnel in the staffs, with the troops, and in other sectors.

The experience of the SHIELD-72 exercise shows that directing an exercise can be divided into various fields of activity:

- political work;
- directing the operational side of an exercise;
- combat actions of ground forces and military ceremonies;
- combat actions of aviation and the air defense forces of the country;
- materiel, technical, and medical support, and servicing of staffs and troops allocated to the exercise.

It is advisable to have a deputy director and a corresponding organization for each of the aforementioned fields of activity; and, in order to quickly resolve all problems pertaining to the allied armies it is necessary to have from each army a deputy director of the exercise with a group of officers who are incorporated into the individual directing organs. It is advisable to designate the umpire personnel in the participating staffs and troops from among generals and officers of the respective allied armies, and the umpires at the remaining command levels -- from the army conducting the exercise.

Operational-tactical exercise experience corroborates the fact that the most correct method of conducting such an exercise is as a two-sided, multilevel command-staff exercise of operational staffs which is organically linked to the tactical exercises of the large units (units).

The SHIELD-72 exercise was conducted on the operational level as a two-sided exercise wherein both sides -- the "Red" and the "Blue" -- planned combat actions in conformity with the regulations and manuals adopted in the allied armies. All the armies used the actual training tables of organization of their large units as a basis.

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It was evident that it is advisable for the actual troop actions to be so conducted as to ensure that tasks are accomplished in a combined manner by units of two or three allied armies. This can be achieved if, for example, combat actions of units are played out on the adjacent flanks of allied large units. A third allied army might be charged with the aviation and artillery support of these units. For example, in the exercise being discussed, an assault crossing of the Elbe River was carried out by the adjacent flanks of divisions of the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic and of the Polish Armed Forces in cooperation with an airborne landing force from the Czechoslovak People's Army which was landed by aircraft of Military Transport Aviation of the Soviet Army, supported by fighter-bomber aircraft from the Czechoslovak People's Army, and covered by fighter aircraft of the same army (Figures 3 and 4). By such combined troop actions we achieve the most complete fulfilment of the principal training goals.

On the operational level the coalition composition of the formations being trained was determined beforehand on the basis of the Plan of Combined Undertakings of the Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact Member States for the 1972 training year. For example, one of the participating combined-arms armies included large units from the Soviet Army, Czechoslovak People's Army, Polish Armed Forces, and the National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic; in the front air army there were large units and units of the Czech and Soviet air forces.

Exercise SHIELD-72 was held during the first half of September 1972 and consisted of three phases.

In the first phase staffs of all levels planned the initial offensive operations. In the process, special attention was devoted to covering the state border (simulated); to occupying a departure position for the offensive; to planning the repelling of "enemy" ground and air aggression, the initial nuclear strike of the front, and the breakthrough of the forward defensive line; and to organizing cooperation among allied large units, units, branch arms, etc. At the same time, the troops readied themselves to conduct combat actions in the areas of the actual actions.

The substance of the second phase was the repelling of "Blue" aggression and the transition of "Red" troops to the offensive. Combat actions were played out initially without the use of nuclear weapons. In so doing, many training problems actually were worked out on the terrain, as, for example: negotiating obstacles in the forward security zone of the "Blue" with Polish and Czech army troops participating; striking an "enemy"

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airfield within the context of an air operation of the Supreme High Command (Czechoslovak People's Army); breaking through a forward defensive line (Polish Armed Forces, Czechoslovak People's Army); committing to a battle a second-echelon division (Soviet Army); and others. Most of these training tasks were carried out with field firings and bombing (Figures 5 and 6).

In order to save time, an operational transition was implemented in the second day of the operation. Staffs received the situation for D10 and, in conformity with it, shifted their positions 200 to 300 kilometers to the Elbe and Vltava rivers.

The third phase of the exercise was devoted to the river crossing and the conduct of operations using nuclear weapons (Figures 7 and 8). Here, these training problems were worked out: repelling a "Blue" counterattack and going over to an offensive with field firing (Soviet and East German armies); landing of an operational landing force (Soviet and Czech armies); assault crossing of a major water obstacle from the march (Polish, East German, and Czech armies); simultaneous takeoff of two aviation regiments from a single airfield (Czech Army); elimination of the aftereffects of a "Blue" nuclear strike and a battle for an inhabited locality (Hungarian and Czech armies); and conduct of combat actions in mountainous-wooded terrain (Soviet and Czech armies). This phase ended with the refinement of the plan for a front offensive operation to fulfil the subsequent task, and with the planning by the staffs of the armies for the next army operations.

From the material that has been set forth in this article we can draw the following conclusions:

1. It is advisable henceforth to conduct combined operational-tactical exercises with the participation of staffs and troops (navies) of allied armed forces for the purpose of training the commands and staffs of allied formations in the control and comprehensive support of coalition formations.
2. When conducting such exercises it is worthwhile to assign primacy to those training goals which are conducive to improving the cooperation of staffs and troops of allied armies, to raising the level of the ground and air training of the troops, and to strengthening combat cooperation and international friendship among the soldiers of the allied armies.
3. The great military-political importance of exercises of this type requires carrying out extensive party-political work both in the troops and among the civilian populace of the country on whose territory an exercise

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is being held. This, of course, is unthinkable without the active assistance of leading organs of the communist (workers') parties of the appropriate states.

4. In our opinion, it is most expedient to conduct such exercises as multilevel exercises.

5. It is best to plan actual troop actions in such a manner that units of two or more allied armies operate shoulder to shoulder when fulfilling a common combat task. This will afford troops of fraternal armies the opportunity of experiencing the spirit of combat comradeship and the power of the international unity of the armed forces of the socialist countries.

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Figure 1
Infantry crosses an antitank ditch



Figure 2
In the center of a nuclear burst



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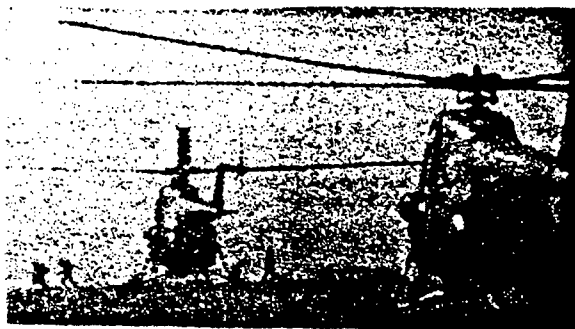
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Figure 3
An assault crossing of a river



Figure 4
Landing an airborne landing force



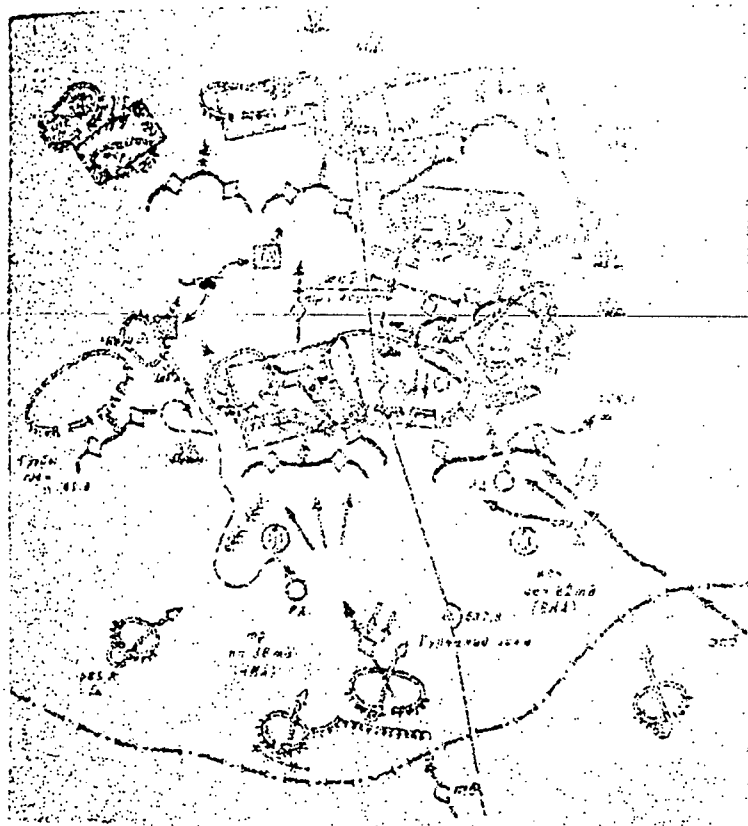
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Figure 5
Combat Actions Conducted by the Forward Detachments
of Divisions in the "Blue" Forward Security Zone



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Problems worked out:

- crossing of a border by the "Reds" and "Blues" on adjacent axes;
- conducting all types of reconnaissance;
- negotiating a zone of obstacles;
- actions of forward detachments and the approach of troops to strong points of the first position in the forward security zone;
- attack from the march against a defending "enemy".

Forces allocated:

- Hungarian People's Army - motorized rifle regiment with reinforcement means;
- Czechoslovak People's Army - tank regiment with reinforcement means;
- fighter air squadron;
- fighter-bomber air squadron.

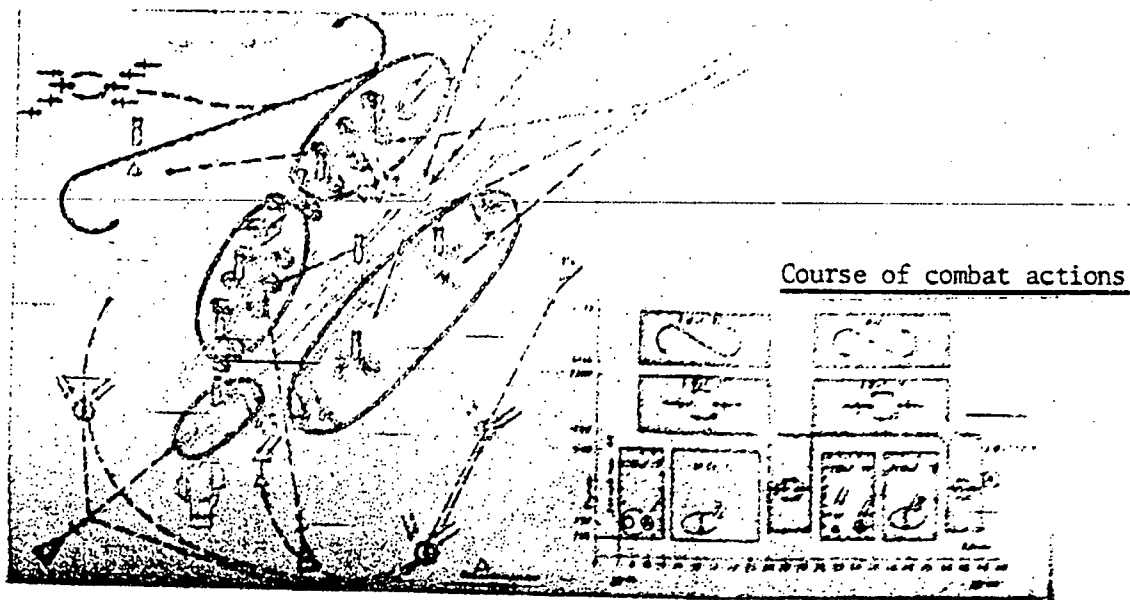
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Figure 6
Destruction of the "Blue" Airfield



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Problems worked out:

- decision by the Commander of the 12th Air Army;
- fighter aviation strike against the air defense and sealing off the airfield;
- strike by SU-7 and MIG-17 fighter-bomber air regiments;
- air combat grouping.

Forces allocated:

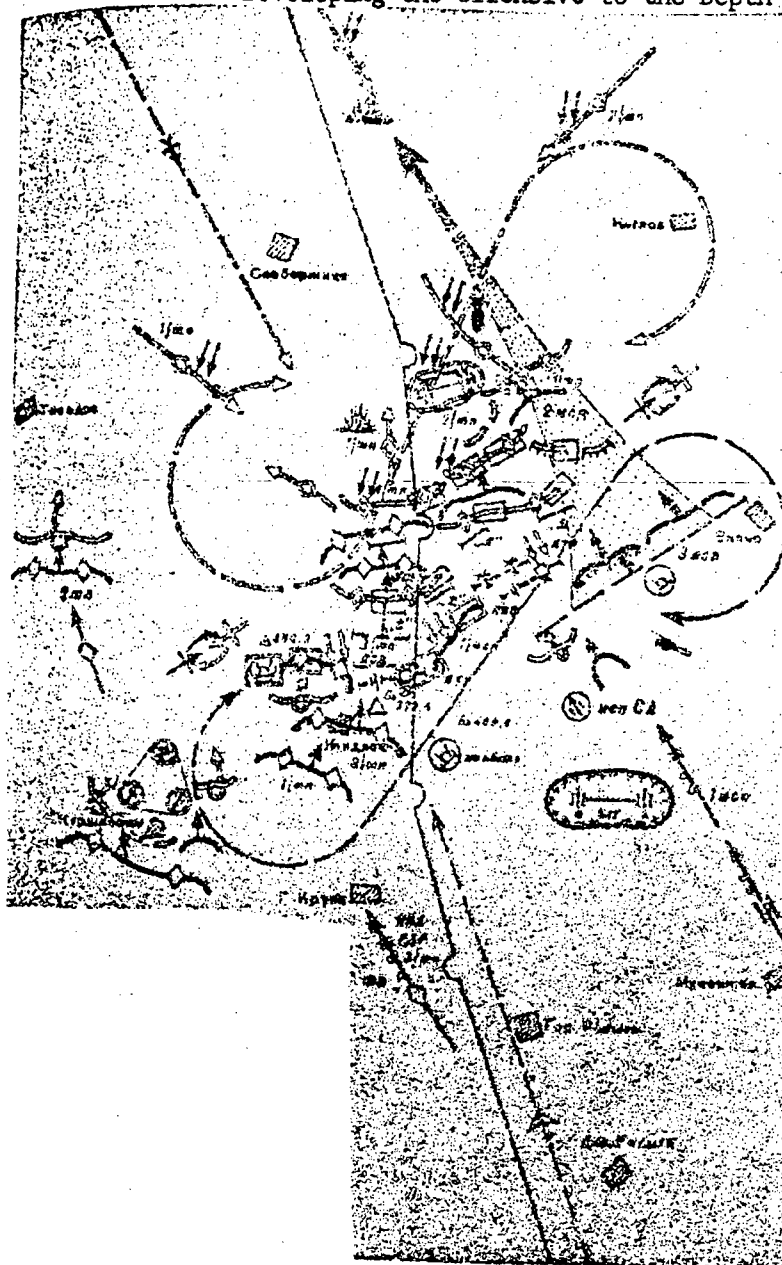
- two fighter-bomber air regiments from the Czechoslovak People's Army;
- one fighter air regiment from the Czechoslovak People's Army;
- one pair of reconnaissance aircraft from the Czechoslovak People's Army.

Total: 98 aircraft

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Figure 7
Repelling an "Enemy" Counterattack and
Developing the Offensive to the Depth



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Problems worked out:

- repelling an enemy counterattack from position; artillery fire; firing from tanks and firing antitank guided missiles;
- committing the second echelon of a regiment to battle for destruction of the counterattacking enemy grouping and for developing the offensive.

Forces allocated:

National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic - tank regiment, less one battalion;

- one artillery battalion

Soviet Army - two motorized rifle battalions;

- two tank companies;
- two artillery battalions;
- 32 (?) fighter aircraft;
- 8 (?) helicopters

Czechoslovak People's Army - reconnaissance aircraft;

- 32 fighter-bomber aircraft;
- 8 helicopters.

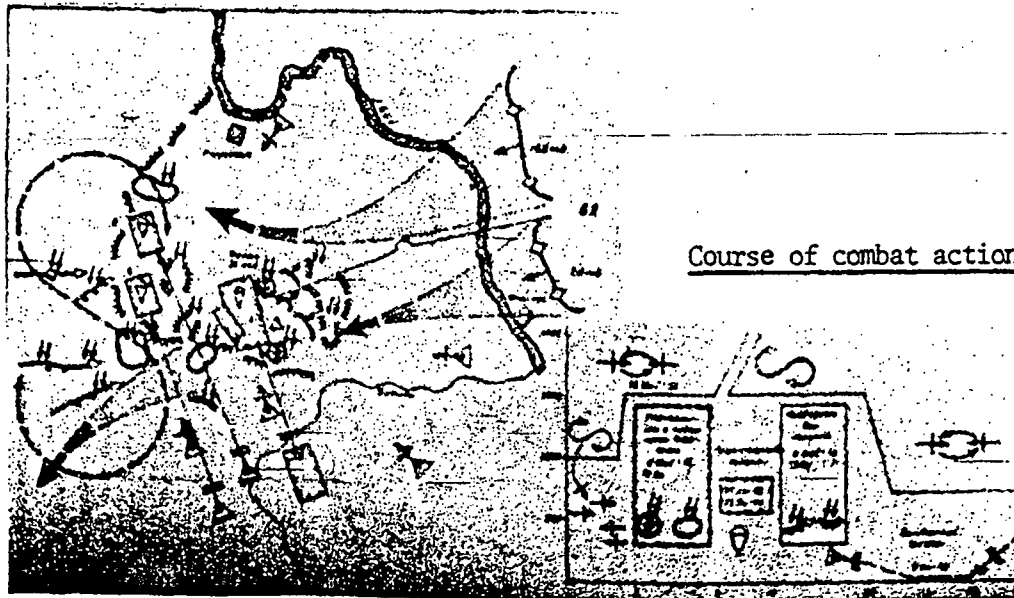
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Figure 8
The Landing and Support of an Airborne Landing Force



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Problems worked out:

- repulsing the "Blue" air reconnaissance;
air battles;
- actions by fighter-bomber aviation to destroy
and neutralize air defense, personnel and
equipment;
- dropping and unloading a parachute and
airlanded landing force; supporting them
with fighters;
- supporting the battle of a landing force with
fighter-bomber aviation.

Forces allocated:

- one flight of reconnaissance aircraft, one
helicopter squadron, one fighter-bomber air
regiment and two air transport regiments from the
Czechoslovak People's Army;
- one helicopter squadron and one air transport regiment
of AN-12's from the Soviet Army.

Total: 117 aircraft

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